

The Commoner.

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William J. Bryan.

Editor and Proprietor.

Bravo! Judge Thompson.

On another page will be found a synopsis of the opinion delivered by Judge Owen P. Thompson, of Jacksonville, Ill., in the suit brought at Springfield against the state board of equalization to compel the assessment of some Chicago corporations which were almost entirely escaping taxation. Enough of the opinion is given to show the facts as they were brought out at the trial, the conduct of respondents and the reasoning upon which the decision was based.

It was fortunate for the tax-payers of Chicago that the case was tried before a brave and honest judge, one who could not be awed or influenced by the great corporations which were shirking their duty, and throwing upon others the burdens which they themselves ought to bear. It is to be hoped that the daily papers which report with fidelity the small stealings by obscure persons will give due attention to this suit which involves \$235,000,000 withheld from assessment by well known corporations.

Solomon Simon seems to have been the only member of the Board of Equalization who tried to protect the plain every-day citizens.

Long life and health to Judge Thompson and Solomon Simon!

Planning an Extended Trip.

The friends of Hon. David B. Hill are planning an extended trip for him. The movement originates at Tacoma, Washington, and the details are being worked out with great care. An invitation has been drawn up and signed by the chairman of the democratic state committee of the state of Washington, and by the national committeeman for that state. It is intended to have the invitation signed by the state chairmen and national committeemen of the states of Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana, and countersigned by the democratic and fusion governors and senators in the above mentioned states. The invitation is then to be endorsed by the democratic congressional committee of the 57th Congress, and presented to Mr. Hill about next January. The visit to the Pacific coast is to be made during the congressional campaign of 1902, and is, of course, entirely in the interests of the democratic party, although it is not expected that Mr. Hill will

refuse to avail himself of any political advantage which the trip may bring to him personally. Those who have the matter in charge feel sure that the distinguished New Yorker can be prevailed upon to accept the invitation if it is spontaneous and fortified by the endorsements above mentioned.

It is also suggested that side excursions may be made into Michigan, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Kansas and Missouri. The plans are being arranged fifteen months ahead, first, because they are very complex and, second, in order to supply any pressure necessary to overcome Mr. Hill's natural reluctance to undertake so conspicuous and disinterested a work. As the states to be visited happen to be the ones in which democrats, populists and silver republicans co-operate, it will be interesting to know whether Mr. Hill will undertake to persuade the democrats of the west to oppose fusion and thus aid the republican party, or whether he has become a convert to those policies which have led to the triple alliance.

Roosevelt on Duty.

The vice-president delivered a speech a few nights ago before the Home Market Club of Boston. A perusal of his remarks convinces one that he shares with the president the tendency to apply the term "duty" to those things which he desires. He says:

"For good or for evil, we now find ourselves with new DUTIES in the West Indies and new DUTIES beyond the Pacific. We cannot escape the performance of these DUTIES. All we can decide for ourselves is whether we shall do them well or ill."

The fact that these "duties" were self-imposed and are clung to in spite of the fact that they involve a violation of American principles, cuts no figure. It is all in the definition of duty. According to republican logic it is very wrong to steal unless you find something which is very valuable—then larceny becomes a duty. The fact that you may be compelled to take human life in order to get the thing desired is immaterial—call it duty and sin becomes a virtue.

A little later on in his speech the real secret of the Philippine policy leaks out. Mr. Roosevelt says:

"In developing these islands it is well to keep steadily in mind that business is one of the great levers of civilization. It is immensely to the interest of the people of the islands that their resources should be developed, and therefore it is to their interest even more than to ours that our citizens should develop their industries. The further fact that it is our duty to see that the development takes place under conditions so carefully guarded that no wrong may come to the islanders, must not blind us to the first great fact, which is the need of development."

The reasoning is complete. Business is a

civilizer; the Filipinos need civilizing, and we are nothing if not business-like. Therefore, it is to the interest of the Filipinos that we should develop them for their good. This is strenuous life, and lest some might be restrained by conscientious scruples, the Vice President felt it necessary to impress upon his hearers that "the first great fact" is the "need of development." The "duty to see that the development takes place under conditions so carefully guarded that no wrong may come to the islanders" is simply a "further fact"—not "the first great fact"—and, "must not blind us" to the principal thing—"the need of development."

Nowhere does Mr. Roosevelt discuss the effect of the new policy upon our theory of government; nowhere does he attempt to explain why a colonial system was wrong in 1776 and right now. His whole argument can be summed up as follows: We are in the Philippine Islands—no matter how we got there, we are there; whether there for good or evil, we cannot get away; it looks as if it were providential for them—and, besides, there is money in it for us.

Watterson's Definition.

Mr. Watterson in a lengthy editorial in the Courier-Journal entitled "The Dream of the Dreamer," fixes, so far as he has power to do so, the status of the editor of THE COMMONER.

Quoting from THE COMMONER's editorial of three weeks ago he says:—

"In these extracts Mr. Bryan shows himself not as a party leader, but as a moral philosopher. They in turn disclose the difference which exists, and has always existed, between fact and theory as illustrated by the conduct of men and the movement of the world. To lay down principles is easy enough. Any man can sit in his watch-tower by the margin of the sea and descant upon the rules of navigation. The mariner tossed by the raging billows applies himself to the needs of the moment, the state of his steering gear, the leaks in his hold, the character of his cargo, the condition of his crew, the weather and the points both of the compass and his destination. Yet navigation is said to be an exact science, whilst government, if a science at all, is least exact of all others; a bundle of quidnuncs, referable to the passions of some, the interests of others, the ignorance of all; intensely, exclusively practical, the very sport and prey of the accidents of fortune.

"He is no statesman who has not learned to detach his policies from his visions. He is no statesman who has not emancipated himself from that which for want of a better name dreamers call the ideal. He is no statesman who does not apply his means to his ends, going fast or slow as occasion requires, but making no mistake in reading the riddle of the time, in deciphering the mathematics of the moment, in translating the spirit and temper of the people.

"Mr. Bryan, let us repeat, is a moral philosopher—not a statesman."

I would feel more overwhelmed by this